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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000218

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: NINEWA: SUNNI ARAB AND KURD POLITICAL ENTITIES
TRADE ACCUSATIONS OF ELECTIONS MALFEASANCE IN POSSIBLE
PREVIEW OF POST-ELECTION CHALLENGES

REF: A. BAGHDAD 119

[B](#). BAGHDAD 121

[C](#). BAGHDAD 141

[D](#). BAGHDAD 161

Classified By: Senior Advisor Thomas Krajieski for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

[1](#). (C) Summary. Representatives of the Sunni Arab al-Hadba list, the National Iraqi Project Group (Hewar), and the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) alleged that they are victims of Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP)-inspired intimidation and violence. The KDP has also levied accusations of elections malfeasance, asserting that the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) openly campaign for Sunni and Shi'a Arab political entities. Their long list of allegations may offer Sunni Arab parties possible excuses for an unexpectedly poor showing in provincial elections. A poor Sunni Arab showing could force an IIP-KDP alliance in order to secure a controlling stake in the Provincial Council and the right to name the governor. End Summary.

[2](#). (C) On January 21, Special Adviser for Northern Iraq (S/A) Krajieski and MND-N Brigadier General Brown met separately with representatives of three Sunni Arab political entities and the KDP.

SKULLDUGGERY IN RUN-UP TO ELECTIONS

[3](#). (C) Hewar aligned National Iraqi Project Group's Sheikh Abdul Karim al-Sheraibi claimed that the KDP is attempting to sneak Kurds from Dohuk and Syria into Western Ninewa to illegally vote in provincial elections. (Note. Sheraibi could not explain how the names of the illegal entrants could appear on the voters roll. End Note) PRT Leader Laskaris clarified that no one will be allowed to vote unless they are previously registered on the polling lists. Sheraibi also accused KDP of having strong ties to IHEC at the national level which in turn has been pressuring Mosul-based IHEC Head Abdul Khalaq to yield to his Deputy Ms. Piroz. Sheraibi opined that Piroz is an active KDP member and orders the closure of voting centers that would have allowed Arab voters in Makhmoor to vote without crossing into Kurdish communities. BG Brown offered to investigate these allegations if Sheraibi would provide more details.

[4](#). (C) Al-Hadba leader Atheel al-Najaifi echoed Sheraibi's claim about fraudulent voters predicting that 75,000 Kurds will attempt to vote illegally in Ninewa (Ref B). Even though S/A Advisor Krajieski explained how no one can vote who is not registered on the lists, Najaifi was not convinced.

[5](#). (C) Najaifi also claimed that 3IA battalion-level

commanders 3IA have repeatedly detained two al-Hadba candidates Mahmoud Mashadani (no relation to former House Speaker) and Awad Ali from Zummar District. According to Najaifi, Mashadani is currently being held at a Kurdish detention facility in al-Kissik, on the border between Ninewa and Irbil provinces. Najaifi again mentioned the case of al-Hadba aligned Yezidi candidate Murad Kishto (Refs A and B).

¶6. (C) Najaifi dismissed Embassy and Coalition Forces efforts to thwart intimidation to division-level Iraqi Army commanders. Even though he vehemently complained of KDP's anti-Sunni Arab rhetoric, Najaifi openly compared the Kurds to Saddam Hussein.

¶7. (C) Not as vocal as Najaifi or Sheraibi, IIP leader Mohammad Shakr speculated that the Pesh merga would prevent IIP's election observers from monitoring the vote in areas under Pesh merga control on Election Day because IIP Qunder Pesh merga control on Election Day because IIP candidates were prevented from campaigning in Northeastern Mosul, the Ninewa Plain.

IHEC SCORECARD

¶8. (C) All three Sunni Arab party representatives stated they did not want a repeat of the failed 2005 elections where, according to Sheraibi, only 100,000 Sunni Arabs voted. All representatives acknowledged that the IHEC was doing a much better job than the 2005 Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, especially in providing more voting centers. But even though they agreed that international

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observers were essential to fostering a sense of election legitimacy among the public, they still feared Election Day violence and do not trust IHEC enough to quickly respond. As such, they requested direct communication with the Coalition Forces so they could report any malfeasance directly.

KDP HAS CONCERNS TOO

¶9. (C) In a subsequent meeting with Ninewa's Vice Governor KDP Khesro Goran he asserted that the Iraqi National Police units tore down KDP-aligned Ninewa Fraternity List posters and were handing out fliers promoting al-Hadba in the Faisalia district of Mosul. Goran also cited that Sunni IA units in al-Nasr are handing out fliers promoting IIP while Shia units were openly supporting Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI).

ELECTION OUTCOMES

¶10. (C) Only KDP's Goran demonstrated a detailed understanding of the electoral vote counting process, while the Sunni Arab representatives lost eye contact and started mumbling. This lack of understanding, however, did not seriously alter their election predictions. They believe that with no one party winning a majority and that an alliance is necessary to gain control of the Provincial Council and determine who will be governor. In addition, there was consensus that the KDP, al-Hadba, Hewar and al-Hal (another Sunni Arab party) would be the main players, with IIP poised to ally with either KDP or al-Hadba. All the representatives also said that political entities with national backing such as the ISCI-backed Shaheed al-Mehrab (which would do well with Shia) or Ayad Allawi's Iraqiyya list would capture one or two seats.

ALLIANCES POST ELECTIONS

¶11. (C) The party leaders said that small parties, such as the political entities that will compete for the minority-guaranteed (quota) seats, will be important players in building coalitions - particularly because, unlike 2005, any given coalition only needs 50 percent plus one to select a governor. Both Sheraibi and Najaifi said their respective entities would work closely together in the new Provincial Council but steadfastly refused to work with the KDP. Likewise, Goran rejected out of hand any alliance with al-Hadba. Only IIP's Shaker refused to say if there were any parties he would ally with, possibly indicating IIP's flexibility to enter into a coalition with any entity.

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